

Railroad Retirement Board

§ 349.3

in the same manner as they are applicable to the appointment of a representative payee under the Railroad Retirement Act.

PART 349—FINALITY OF DECISIONS REGARDING UNEMPLOYMENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE BENEFITS

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AUTHORITY: 45 U.S.C. 355 and 362(1).

SOURCE: 65 FR 66499, Nov. 6, 2000, unless otherwise noted.

§ 349.1 Reopening and revising decisions.

(a) This part sets forth the Board's rules governing finality of decisions with respect to benefits under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act. After the expiration of the time limits for review as set forth in part 320 of this chapter, decisions may be reopened and revised only under the conditions described in this subpart, by the bureau, office or entity that made the earlier decision or by a bureau, office, or other entity at a higher level which has the claim properly before it. Whether a final decision is reopened or not reopened is solely within the discretion of the Board.

(b) A *final decision*, as that term is used in this part, means any decision under § 320.5 of this chapter where the time limit for review, as set forth in part 320 of this chapter or in the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act, has expired.

(c) *Reopening* a final decision under this part means a conscious determination on the part of the agency to reconsider an otherwise final decision for purposes of revising that decision.

(d) *New and material evidence*, as that phrase is used in this part, means evi-

dence which was unavailable to the agency at the time the decision was made, and which the claimant could not reasonably have been expected to have submitted at that time.

§ 349.2 Conditions for reopening.

A final decision may be reopened:

(a) Within 12 months of the date of the notice of such decision, for any reason;

(b) Within four years of the date of the notice of such decision:

(1) If there is new and material evidence; or

(2) If the decision was not reasonably consistent with the evidence of record at the time of adjudication.

(c) At any time if:

(1) The decision was obtained by fraud or similar fault;

(2) The decision was that the claimant was not a qualified employee, and he or she is now qualified because compensation was credited to the employee's record of compensation in accordance with part 211 of this chapter:

(i) To correct errors apparent on the face of the compensation record;

(ii) To enter items transferred by the Social Security Administration which were credited under the Social Security Act when they should have been credited to the employee's railroad retirement compensation record; or

(iii) To correct errors made in the allocation of earnings to individuals or periods which would have made him or her a qualified employee at the time of the decision if the earnings had been credited to his or her earnings record at that time;

(3) The decision is wholly or partially unfavorable to a claimant, but only to correct a clerical error or an error that appears on the face of the evidence that was considered when the decision was made.

§ 349.3 Change of legal interpretation or administrative ruling.

A change of legal interpretation or administrative ruling upon which a decision is based does not render a decision erroneous and does not provide a basis for reopening.

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§ 349.4 Late completion of timely investigation.

(a) A decision may be revised after the applicable time period in §§ 349.2(a) or (b) expires if the Board begins an investigation into whether to revise the decision before the applicable time period expires and the agency diligently pursues the investigation to the conclusion. The investigation may be based on a request by a claimant or on action by the Board.

(b) *Diligently pursued* for purposes of this section means that in view of the facts and circumstances of a particular case, the necessary action was undertaken and carried out as promptly as the circumstances permitted. Diligent pursuit will be presumed to have been met if the investigation is concluded and, if necessary, the decision is revised within six months from the date the investigation began.

(c) If the investigation is not diligently pursued to its conclusion, the decision will be revised if a revision is applicable and if it is favorable to the claimant. It will not be revised if it would be unfavorable to the claimant.

§ 349.5 Notice of revised decision.

(a) When a decision is revised, notice of the revision will be mailed to the parties to the decision at their last known address. The notice will state the basis for the revised decision and the effect of the revision. The notice will also inform the parties of the right to further review.

(b) If a hearings officer or the three-member Board proposes to revise a decision, and the revision would be based

only on evidence included in the record on which the prior decision was based, all parties will be notified in writing of the proposed action. If a revised decision is issued by a hearings officer, any party may request that it be reviewed by the three-member Board, or the three-member Board may review the decision on its own initiative.

§ 349.6 Effect of revised decision.

A revised decision is binding unless:

(a) The revised decision is being reconsidered or appealed in accord with part 320 of this chapter;

(b) The three-member Board reviews the revised decision; or

(c) The revised decision is further revised consistent with this part.

§ 349.7 Time and place to request a review and/or hearing on revised decision.

A party to a revised decision may request, as appropriate, further review of the decision in accordance with the rules set forth in part 320 of this chapter. Further review or a hearing will be held according to the rules set forth in part 320 of this chapter.

§ 349.8 Discretion of the three-member Board to reopen or not to reopen a final decision.

In any case in which the three-member Board may deem proper, the Board may direct that any decision, which is otherwise subject to reopening under this part, shall not be reopened or direct that any decision, which is otherwise not subject to reopening under this part, shall be reopened.